Travel COMPANION

EASTERN BOTSWANA
“Half the fun of the travel... is the aesthetic of lostness”

Ray Bradbury
Welcome to Botswana

Botswana is well known for having some of the best wilderness and wildlife areas on the African continent. With a full 38 percent of its total land area devoted to national parks, reserves and wildlife management areas – for the most part unfenced, allowing animals to roam wild and free – travel through many parts of the country has the feeling of moving through an immense Nature wonderland.

Botswana is a rarity in our over-populated, over-developed world. Untamed and untameable, it is one of the last great refuges for Nature’s magnificent pageantry of life.

Experience here the stunning beauty of the world’s largest intact inland Delta – the Okavango; the unimaginable vastness of the world’s second largest game reserve – the Central Kalahari Game Reserve; the isolation and other-worldliness of the Makgadikgadi – uninhabited pans the size of Portugal; and the astoundingly prolific wildlife of the Chobe National Park.

Botswana is the last stronghold for a number of endangered bird and mammal species, including Wild Dog, Cheetah, Brown Hyena, Cape Vulture, Wattled Crane, Kori Bustard, and Pel’s Fishing Owl. This makes your safari experience even more memorable, and at times you will feel simply surrounded by wild animals.

The first – and most lasting impressions – will be of vast expanses of uninhabited wilderness stretching from horizon to horizon, the sensation of limitless space, astoundingly rich wildlife and bird viewing, night skies littered with stars and heavenly bodies of an unimaginable brilliance, and stunning sunsets of unearthly beauty.

As well, with more and more cultural tourism options on offer, you will be charmed by the people of Botswana, visiting their villages and experiencing first-hand their rich cultural heritage.

But perhaps most of all, Botswana’s greatest gift is its ability to put us in touch with our natural selves. It offers that vital link so keenly felt by inhabitants of the developed world, a pervasive void we feel but often cannot name – our connectedness with Nature and the astonishing diversity of plants and animals to be explored.
The Botswana Tourism Organization (BTO) was established by an Act of Parliament in 2003. Its mandate is to market and promote Botswana as a premier tourist destination of choice, to promote Botswana as a tourism investment venue, and to grade and classify accommodation facilities in the country. The Organization started its operations in January 2006.

A Board of Directors, consisting of 15 members and appointed by the Minister of Wildlife, Environment and Tourism, governs the BTO. The Board is comprised of the Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson, a representative from the governing Ministry, and 12 members from the public and private sectors in the tourism industry.

BTO holds a broad portfolio that touches nearly all aspects of tourism development in the country, including:

- **To** plan, develop and implement tourism marketing and promotion strategies aimed at creating and sustaining a positive image of Botswana as a tourist and investor destination;
- **To** plan, formulate and implement strategies for promoting sustainable tourism development in collaboration with the tourism industry’s private sector, local authorities, local communities and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs);
- **To** determine policies for giving effect to the objects and purposes of the Act that established the BTO;
- **To** advise Government to change, review or formulate policy and strategies where necessary;
- **To** implement Government policies and programmes aimed at facilitating the continued growth and development of the tourism sector;
- **To** set performance targets and to design programmes aimed at facilitating the continued growth and development of tourism;
- **To** develop and implement appropriate strategies for achieving annual work plan objectives and to set performance targets aimed at the promotion of tourism business in Botswana;
- **To** investigate any matter that has a negative effect on the tourism industry, and to make recommendations thereon to the Government;
- **To** manage and co-ordinate Botswana’s tourism promotional and publicity programmes;
- **To** provide market research information and market intelligence on tourism;
- **To** promote the expansion of existing and new investment in Botswana’s tourism sector;
TO establish and expand local as well as international travel trade networks to promote and sell Botswana;

TO market and promote the establishment of joint tourism business ventures between citizen and foreign investors;

TO grade and classify accommodation facilities in the tourism industry;

TO promote the improvement of tourism industry standards, in the areas of service standards and a code of ethics;

TO conduct tourism awareness campaigns within and outside Botswana; and

TO develop and improve existing tourism opportunities, and to diversify the sector to include other forms of tourism, such as cultural and heritage tourism, eco-tourism, entertainment, recreational and leisure tourism, and to bring them to the required marketable standard.

The grading system serves as a means to protect the consumer and guarantee quality accommodation and services in Botswana. It also assists the accommodation establishment to benchmark its performance against set standards.

Additionally, the grading system is a useful tool to indicate to travel agents, tour operators and tourists the general quality of accommodation facilities in the country. This can serve as a guide for tourists planning their destinations in Botswana.

The system also provides a framework to industry investors so that they are able to design their facilities to attract the desired market segments.

BTO is funded through grants received from the Government.

LOCAL OFFICES

Headquarters
Tel: +267 391-3111
Fax: +267 395-9220
board@botswanatourism.co.bw
www.botswanatourism.co.bw

Main Mall
Tel: +267 395-9455
Fax: +267 318-1373

Maun
Tel: +267 686-1056
Tel: +267 686-3093 (airport office)
Fax: +267 686-1062
maun@botswanatourism.co.bw

Kasane
Tel: +267 625-0555
Tel: +267 625-2210/1 (airport office)
Fax: +267 625-0424
kasane@botswanatourism.co.bw

Francistown
Tel: +267 244-0113
Fax: +267 244-0120
francistown@botswanatourism.co.bw

Ghanzi
Tel: +267 659-6704
Fax: +267 659-6706
ghanzi@botswanatourism.co.bw

Palapye
Tel: +267 492-2138
Fax: +267 492-2147
palapye@botswanatourism.co.bw

Tsabong
Tel: +267 654-0822
Fax: +267 654-0813/4
tsabong@botswanatourism.co.bw

See page 33 for additional contact details for all local and international offices.
Eastern Highlights

Tour the Northern Tuli Game Reserve on horse back, mountain bike or hiking.

Explore the rich historical and archaeological sites of ancient civilisations.

Visit Francistown’s Supa Ngwao Museum, an important repository of northern cultures.
Experience the exhilarating waterfalls – and historical sites – of Moremi Gorge.

Enjoy the unique and breathtaking topography of eastern Botswana.
Spectacular landscapes, rich and varied wildlife, and a host of historical, cultural and natural history attractions define this unique and very striking corner of northeastern Botswana.

Straddling the Shashe, Motloutse and Limpopo Rivers, which serve as natural boundaries with Zimbabwe and South Africa, the Northern Tuli Game Reserve (NTGR) comprises 71,000 hectares of remarkably diverse habitat, including mopane bushland, riverine woodland, and marshland, punctuated by towering sandstone cliffs, basalt formations and unusually shaped kopjes – making for truly breathtaking scenery.

One of the largest privately owned game reserves in southern Africa and incorporating three major private concessions (Tuli Safari Lodge, Nitani Private Game Reserve, and Mashatu Game Reserve), the NTGR is home to 48 species of mammals and over 350 species of birds, with an estimated 20,000 animals residing in the reserve.

Most naturally occurring wildlife species are present, including elephant, kudu, zebra, impala, duiker, wildebeest, waterbuck, steenbok, and warthog. Large herds of eland – often not seen elsewhere in Botswana – are present, and these are indeed an awesome sight. All major predators, including lion, leopard, cheetah and hyena, are present, and the birdlife is prolific.

The NTGR is adjacent to a larger area of eastern Botswana called the Tuli Block. This is a ten kilometre wide strip of land running approximately 180 kilometres south to Martin’s Drift that holds a string of commercial agricultural and game farms, several of which also offer tourist facilities.

Travellers keen for a more active safari experience will delight in all there is on offer. You can hike the reserve, bike the reserve, horse-ride the reserve, and even hot air balloon the reserve!

At Mashatu Game Reserve, guests can accompany elephant or predator researchers, to gain first-hand insights into the behaviour, feeding habits, territories, demography, and social structure of these animals, as well as critical wildlife conservation issues. A similar experience awaits guests at Nitani – as they come to understand the complexities of a long-term hyena research project.
Molema Bush Camp, a community based tourism project managed and operated by Tuli Safari Lodge, is an ideal way to take part in a tourism concept that is rapidly gaining momentum in Africa. Local communities become active partners in tourism projects, from which they can more readily see clear-cut financial and social benefits.

Molema is a joint venture between three local villages: Motlhabaneng, Lentswe le Moriti and Mathathane and two tour operators: Tuli Safari Lodge and Talana Farms.

Archaeological sites provide an important historical perspective to the region. Iron Age sites demonstrate the formidable skills in pottery, mining, and smelting of the Zhizo, Leopard’s Kopje and Mapungubwe peoples, who practised agriculture and animal husbandry in the area.

Artifacts from the Mapungubwe Kingdom (1220-1290AD), a precursor to the Great Zimbabwe civilisation, reveal the sophistication of the technology and society of its people, and their extensive trade networks.

The NTGR will form the heart of the proposed Shashe/Limpopo Trans-Frontier Conservation Area (TFCA), its signatories – Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa – agreeing to cooperate to conserve and manage shared natural resources. Rich in biodiversity, the proposed TFCA will cover approximately 4,872 square kilometres and will be one of the largest wildlife conservation areas in southern Africa.

**ACTIVITIES**

- Game drives
- Hot air balloon
- Horse-back safari
- Walking or cycling safari
- Family safari
- Animal tracking
- Predator drives
- Ivory drive
- Mountain bike safari
- Stargazing
- Bird watching
- Cultural tourism
- Community tourism
- Basket weaving
- Arts and crafts
- Historical sites
- Health spa
- Hyena research project
The Northern Tuli Game Reserve offers unique wildlife viewing opportunities, including safari drives, horseback safaris, walking safaris, mountain biking safaris and even hot air balloon safaris.
The stunning Mapungubwe Hill is accessible through two very steep and narrow paths; Inset: One of the many archaeological finds from the hill, a Golden Sceptre.

MAPUNGUBWE HILL

Mapungubwe was a prosperous Iron Age metropolis situated on the banks of the Limpopo River that thrived nearly a thousand years ago. It was ruled by a king of the Leopard Kopje people, and its extensive trade networks reached as far as Egypt, India and China.

The kingdom’s capital was situated at the 300 metre long Mapungubwe Hill, which today is only accessible through two very steep and narrow paths that twist their way to the top. The civilisation of Mapungubwe was highly developed; its unique arts were of a superior craftsmanship and quality. One of the most famous pieces unearthed by archaeologists is a superbly crafted golden rhino. Other pieces include beautiful pottery and jewellery. Mophane woodlands, riverine forests and sandstone formations create a breathtaking backdrop for Mapungubwe Hill. The area is rich in wildlife, including white rhino, elephant, giraffe, gemsbok, eland, lion, leopard and hyenas, as well as over 400 species of birds.

ACTIVITIES

Community tourism
Basket weaving
Arts and crafts
Local village tours often become a highlight of a trip to Tuli. A delightful morning’s outing to the quaint village of Motlhabaneng consists of a visit to the *kgotla* for a chat with the village chief or headman, a visit to the local primary school where children don traditional clothing and dance, and a visit to a basket-maker’s home where guests interact with villagers, learn something of their traditional way of life and watch hand-woven baskets in the making.

Ancient rock paintings, almost certainly done by southern Africa’s original inhabitants, the San, can also be seen at the outskirts of Motlhabaneng. The paintings depict people, animals, hunting scenes and mythological creatures, part of the San’s complex cosmology and belief system.
SOLOMON’S WALL

This rather amazing natural phenomenon, situated in the Tuli Block, is a 30 metre high basalt dyke that once formed a steep-sided natural dam wall across the Motloutse River. A full ten metres wide, this ancient dyke once held back a great lake, with waterfalls spilling over the dyke. Evidence of this great lake are the numerous semi-precious stones (e.g. quartz and agate) found along the Motloutse riverbed. Tall fever trees line the natural beach, making for a shady picnic site. Solomon’s Wall can only be reached with a four-wheel drive vehicle.
Old Palapye (Phalatswe)

The remains of the London Missionary Society Church, Old Palapye; Facing page: Photophoto Gorge.
Old Palapye is an important multicultural historical site containing artifacts from the Middle Stone Age, the Late Stone Age, the Early Iron Age, and in contemporary times, the 19th century capital of the Bangwato (led by Khama III), who occupied the area from 1889-1902.

Though only capital for thirteen years, the population of this settlement at the foot of the Tswapong Hills is estimated to have been approximately 300,000 people, including resident European missionaries and hunters. The wet, well watered micro-climate of Tswapong, and the perennial springs and waterfalls of Photophoto valley are believed to have been the main attractions for settlement.

When water supplies dwindled and proved insufficient, the Bangwato left Phalatswe and established their new capital at Serowe, where it remains today.

The occupation of Old Palapye is significant in the history of Botswana, particularly its role in restricting the Ndebele’s penetration to the then Rhodesia. It was critical as a centre for European encounters with Batswana, and provides evidence for one of the first agro-towns in Botswana.

Stone walls, middens (the stone remains of rondavels), rock paintings, and the remains of a prison, market centre and historic graves (both Europeans’ and Batswana’s) can all be seen at Old Palapye. The most outstanding structure is the remains of the London Missionary Society Church, which was built between 1891 and 1894. The front and back of the burnt-brick structure still stand, giving some idea of the huge effort that would have gone into its construction.

Some wild animals, such as baboons, vervet monkeys, porcupines, rock dassies and leopard, still inhabit the area. There are two Cape Vulture breeding colonies, the largest situated at Gootau, with more than 200 breeding pairs. The village headman must be approached to visit this site, and care should be taken not to disturb the birds.

The nearby Photophoto Gorge is less impressive than Moremi Gorge, but more accessible. It is used to water livestock and for religious rituals.

Situated near the village of Malaka (where there are waterfalls), Old Palapye has been earmarked for further tourism development, through the Malaka community based tourism project, and in conjunction with developments at Tswapong.

Old Palapye was gazetted as a National Monument in 1938, and falls under the jurisdiction of the National Museum and Monuments.
Situated east of Palapye, the imposing Tswapong Hills rise almost four hundred metres above the surrounding plains. These one-billion year-old titans extend 60 kms west of the village of Moremi, and measure a full 20 kms in breadth. Comprised of sandstone, ironstone and quartzite, which give them their characteristic rich hues, Tswapong holds numerous fascinating, and very beautiful, archaeological, historical and natural history sites.

Some of the earliest traces of Bantu-speaking people in southern Africa have been found in the gorges at Tswapong, and many are littered with fragments of beautifully decorated pottery dating back to the first millennium. Collapsed and buried iron smelters give evidence of the iron smelting that took place in the gorges; and red ochre paintings can be seen under rocky overhangs.

Big game used to occupy this area, but now the hills are home to such mammals as rock dassies, baboons, brown hyena and leopard. Over 350 species of birds have been recorded in the area, including the endangered Cape Vulture, the Black Eagle, the Black Stork and the beautiful Meyer’s Parrot, as well as over a hundred butterfly species.

One of the biggest draws is the lush, wet vegetation and a series of waterfalls – uncharacteristic of Botswana’s generally dry, waterless terrain.

The hills absorb water from deep aquifers in the ground and accumulated rain from above, releasing it in natural fresh springs scattered throughout the hills, which in turn form brooks and – with greater accumulations of water – waterfalls that collect in beautiful lagoons.

ACTIVITIES

- Community tourism
- Waterfalls
- Camping

MOREMI GORGE

Situated deep within the hills, which can only be reached by a rather vigorous climb, Moremi Gorge is the source of three permanent waterfalls. The first two are smaller, but fan out into large waterholes, whilst the uppermost falls is a full ten-metres high, giving rise to arresting scenes of clear water cascading over rocky outcrops, then collecting in a deeply hidden, lushly vegetated, fern-fringed lagoon.

The Moremi Gorge is a designated National Monument and is managed by the Department of National Museum, Monuments and Art Gallery.

The Moremi Mannonye Conservation Trust, through the support of Botswana Tourism Organization, involves local residents in developing the area for non-consumptive eco-tourism. The area is of great religious and spiritual importance to the community.

Before venturing into the hills, you should, as a matter of courtesy, request permission from the local headman. A National Museum guide is available at Moremi village.

Tswapong is an ideal weekend getaway for residents of and visitors to Gaborone or Francistown. It doesn’t require a four-wheel drive vehicle, and camping is allowed near the site, though at present visitors must come fully self-contained. Plans are underway to develop camping and ablution blocks, trail signage and wooden elevated pathways.
The mining town of Selebi-Phikwe was established to house and service the employees of the Bamangwato Concessions Ltd., a nickel mine that began operations in 1973. Originally there were two villages that straddled the then unexploited deposits of nickel and copper in the area. When the minerals were discovered, the mine and township were built on the land between the two villages, and their names were combined – Selebi-Phikwe.

Copper-nickel ore is extracted from shafts in deep, open cast mines, and is transported by rail. The coal-fired power station Morupule was built to supply electricity to the mine and surrounding areas. The mine is the main employer in the town, which has the usual amenities of shopping centres, hotels, guest houses and an airport.

**LETSIBOGO DAM**

The Letsibogo Dam is part of the massive North-South Carrier (NSC) Water Project, which saw the construction of several dams, water transmission systems and water treatment works to develop water resources in the northeast of the country and relieve tight water demand in the southeast, particularly in the capital. NSC links Letsibogo and major wellfields to Gaborone via a large, 400 kilometre pipeline.

A major leisure venue for residents of, or visitors to, ‘Phikwe,’ the Letsibogo Dam is situated near the nearby village of Mmadinare.

**ACTIVITIES**

- Swimming
- Fishing
- Sailing
- Windsurfing
- Picnics
- Panoramic views

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**Rock paintings at Lepokole Hills;**

**Left: Letsibogo Dam; Facing page:**

**Fabulous scenery at Lepokole Hills.**
LEPOKOLE HILLS

Situated approximately 25 kilometres northeast of the village of Bobonong, the Lepokole Hills are composed of colossal granite blocks often piled one on top of the other, giving way to fantastic creations of rock, trees, vegetation and sky. The Hills are in fact the southernmost extension of the Matopos Hills in Zimbabwe, which feature similar terrain.

Hiking, climbing and fabulous scenery are some of the main attractions here, with incredible views from atop the highest hills. And the area is extremely rich in archaeological and historical treasures.

San rock paintings can be seen in the rocky overhangs of kopjes, and some tell the story of their retreat from encroaching peoples into these hills. Walled ruins in the style of the Great Zimbabwe era can also be seen, as can the remains of ancient village settlements and Iron Age sites, their evidence including stone arrangements, granaries, pottery and Iron-Age tools.

A community based tourism project for the development of Lepokole is being administered through the Mapanda Conservation Trust. Plans are underway to fence the area surrounding the hills, restock it with indigenous wildlife, and offer nature walks and wildlife viewing, as well as guided hikes up the hills. The Trust also plans to build camping facilities. At present a camp site is available, but there are no ablution blocks or other facilities, thus travellers must come fully self-contained. It is proper courtesy to request permission to camp at the hills from the village headman.

Botswana Tourism Organization is assisting the communities in the Lepokole Conservation Area to promote local conservation, generate important income for rural residents, and diversify their tourism product, enabling the communities to achieve the maximum tourism potential of this rich and diverse area. Proposed development projects will include activities such as nature walks, sunset moments, insects and bird watching, camping, game viewing and hiking.

ACTIVITIES

Archaeological sites
Rock paintings
Bird watching
Panoramic views
Historical sites
Hill climbing
Iron age sites
Hiking
One of Botswana’s oldest towns, Francistown was the centre of southern Africa’s first gold rush. It came to prominence through European prospectors’ discovery and mining of gold in the region in the mid-19th century, first at Tatitown (about 50 kilometres from Francistown), and later at Francistown itself (at Monarch Mine, recently revived).

Gold had been mined by Africans living in the region for generations before. Indeed, the wealth and prosperity which the region’s gold deposits have brought stretches as far back as the 12th to 14th centuries.

The city was named after the British prospector and miner Daniel Francis, who acquired prospecting licenses in 1869, eventually becoming director of the Tati Concessions Company. Francis...
and other prospectors often used ancient gold shafts as guiding points for their prospecting, or they simply carried on the mining which had been started in those shafts generations ago. The city is still surrounded by old, abandoned mines.

The original town was founded as a settlement near Monarch mine in 1897, consisting of only one main street lined with bustling saloons and supply stores running parallel to the railway line, which was established by British entrepreneur Cecil Rhodes as a vital link between South Africa and Britain's northern colonies.

Situated 436 kilometres north of Gaborone, Francistown is the country’s second largest city, and an industrial and transport hub, with a railway line leading north to Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. The main road northwest of Francistown gives passage to Maun and the Okavango Delta, Kasane and Chobe National Park, Livingstone, Zambia and Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.

Francistown is currently undergoing an economic boom, mostly due to the recent resuscitation of gold mining; this has given new life to the property and transport sectors, with the accompanying infrastructural additions and developments.

Over the years, Francistown (population approximately 115 000) has undergone continual expansion and modernisation, to the point that much of its original dusty frontier town atmosphere has disappeared. Modern malls, shops, hotels, restaurants, housing developments and industrial complexes now dominate the city, with some old, colonial buildings still to be seen in the city centre. Yet colourful, distinctively African local markets dot the city, and pleasant parks give it a user-friendly feeling. A lively nightclub scene showcases good local music and dance.

**SUPA NGWAO MUSEUM**

This interesting museum contains exhibitions on the culture and history of the Kalanga people, as well as a photographic exhibition on the early history of Francistown and Botswana, thus serving as an important repository of northern Botswana’s heritage. Its collection includes pottery, woodcarvings, basketry and musical instruments.

Authentic, hand-made crafts can be purchased at the Museum’s Craft Shop, which supports approximately 200 craftsmen/women mostly from the surrounding areas.

The Museum also serves as information centre for Francistown and conducts guided walking tours of the city, covering most of the important historical sites. To book a tour, call +267 240-3088, or email snm@info.bw

**BIRDS AND GAME BOTSWANA**

An animal orphanage established by Uncharted Africa, Birds and Game Botswana has served as refuge for injured or orphaned wild animals for the past twenty years. A popular outing for local residents and a venue for school trips, it has also helped to educate the public about the country’s wildlife heritage.

**ACTIVITIES**

- Bird watching
- Arts and crafts
- Museum visits
Established on Tati Company Land, Tachila Nature Reserve covers approximately 8 200 hectares of well preserved natural habitat in an area adjacent to Francistown city.

Thachila’s mandate is to serve as a recreational facility for residents of and visitors to Francistown, to provide environmental education for Botswana schoolchildren, to promote wildlife and other natural resource conservation, to increase eco-tourism potential and to help diversify the largely mining dependent economy, thus creating employment opportunities.

Tachila – a Kalanga name meaning ‘saviour of all living things’ – is a broad-based community project that offers natural, archaeological, historical and cultural attractions unique to Francistown and North East District. Naturally occurring wildlife species include leopard, hyena, kudu, impala, bushbuck, steenbok, klipspringer, rock dassie and warthog. Eventually, rhino, sable and roan antelope, cheetah, giraffe, zebra, wildebeest and eland will be introduced.

A luxury lodge, with conference centre and restaurant will be built in the reserve; and all structures will be eco-friendly, utilising renewable energy, recycling programmes, grey-water reticulation and organic gardens.

Whilst still in the development stages, visitors can now enter the reserve for game drives. This is on a self-drive basis, and on arrangement only. Tel: +267 241-2313, or +267 74-086-277, email gavshaw@iafrica.com

**ACTIVITIES**

- Game drives
- Archaeological sites
- Historical & cultural tourism
- Conferencing
An Iron Age, stone wall site dating back to 1450AD, Domboshaba (meaning ‘red rock’ in Kalanga) was occupied towards the end of the Great Zimbabwe period.

Great Zimbabwe was an extensive kingdom centred at modern-day Masvingo, in present day Zimbabwe, which stretched into northern Botswana.

Situated in the northeast of the country, along the Masunga-Kalamati Road, Domboshaba contains excellent examples of cement-less, stone walling and enclosures; some have been reconstructed by the National Museum archaeologists. It was one of the first National Monuments to be gazetted in the country – in 1938.

Domboshaba is an open site (approximately 8 hectares in area) that includes several enclosures and the remains of partitions and bulkheads, the most spectacular of which is ‘Wall 28.’ This was rebuilt by archaeologists and incorporates beautifully flowing courses of granite blocks built around existing boulders and trees.

The most striking features of the walls are their even-ness, despite their massive width (some are 2 metres thick) and their beautiful decorative motifs and stylistic variations, both underlining the absolute precision and aesthetic considerations with which they were built. Despite the fact that no cement was used in their construction, some walls have survived intact for centuries.

Further up the hill, the floor plan of what is believed to have been a headman’s or chief’s residence can be seen. And the circular remains of houses that once dotted this community reveal earthen floors with stone edgings.

Many walls have collapsed and the National Museum has prioritised this site for further restoration and development, including improved trail signage, camping and ablution facilities.

An easy return day drive from Francistown that doesn’t require four-wheel drive, Domboshaba gives entrance to one of Africa’s greatest empires, and an important cultural heritage of the nation.
Botswana is a land-locked country situated in southern Africa. It borders South Africa, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Approximately two-thirds of the country lies within the Tropics.

Botswana covers an area of 581,730 square kilometres – about the size of France or Texas.

Most of the country is flat, with some small hills in the eastern areas. Kalahari sands cover 84 percent of the surface area. With the exception of the northern areas, most of Botswana is without perennial surface water.

Gaborone

Francistown, Lobatse, Selebi-Phikwe

Maun, Kasane

30 September 1966

Multi-party democracy

His Excellency Lt. Gen. Seretse Khama Ian Khama

1.85 million, with an average annual growth rate of 2.4% (2006 statistics)

Setswana

English

Pula

Diamonds, copper nickel, beef, soda ash, tourism

Maize, sorghum, millet
## Visitor Information

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See page 33 for all local and international Botswana Tourism Organization offices.
GETTING THERE

BY AIR


Most major international airlines from Europe, the United States, Asia and Australia fly to Johannesburg, South Africa, where connecting flights can be booked into Gaborone, Maun, or Kasane.

- South African Airways (SAA) provides daily non-stop service to Johannesburg from New York (JFK), with same day connections into Botswana.
- SAA also offers daily direct service to Johannesburg from Washington, DC (IAD).
- Delta Airlines offers daily non-stop service into Johannesburg from Atlanta (ATL).
- Air Botswana offers daily flights between Johannesburg–Maun.

- South African Airways or South African Express offer multiple flights daily between Johannesburg and Gaborone.
- Air Namibia provides frequent flights between Windhoek and Maun. Regional air charter services are also available.

For flight details contact:

**Air Botswana**
Web: www.airbotswana.co.bw

**South African Airways/ South African Express Airways**
Web: www.flysaa.com

**Delta Airlines**
Web: www.delta.com

**Air Namibia**
Web: www.airnamibia.com.na

BY ROAD

Botswana is accessible by tarred road from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Namibia. Vehicles are driven on the left hand side of the road. A valid international driver’s license, along with vehicle registration documents, are required to drive in Botswana, and drivers should always carry them.

Most major roads in Botswana are tarred and driving conditions are generally good. The main roads to established areas are regularly graded. Four-wheel drive is required when travelling in the national parks and reserves, as well as in remote areas.

Car and four-wheel drive rental services are widely available in major tourist centres, airports and hotels.

BY BUS

There are scheduled bus services across borders between Botswana and South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Zambia, as well as good internal bus services linking major and minor towns and villages across the country.

BY RAIL

There are no passenger train services in Botswana.

GETTING AROUND IN TOWNS

Taxis are normally a convenient way to get around in towns and are reasonably priced. They are easily identified in designated stations or can be contacted by telephone. Taxis to Gaborone are also available from Sir Seretse Khama International Airport.

ENTRY FORMALITIES

VISAS

Citizens of the United States, Canada, most European and Commonwealth countries do not require a visa for entry into Botswana.

Visitors should check up to date visa requirements with the Botswana embassy or consulate in their home country, or their travel agents, before departure.

**It is vital for visitors to carry a valid passport and sufficient funds to facilitate their stay.**
**Note:** For countries with whom Botswana has no diplomatic representation, visa information and processing is available through British Embassies and High Commissions.

**LUGGAGE RESTRICTIONS**
Check with your air carrier for luggage restrictions on scheduled international and domestic flights. In general, charter flight luggage and weight restrictions are: 20kgs (44lbs) on domestic flights and 12kgs (26lbs) on light aircraft (including Okavango Delta charter flights); soft sided luggage with no protruding wheels only.

**CUSTOMS OFFICES**

**HEADQUARTERS**
Private Bag 0041, Gaborone
Tel: +267 363-8000 / 363-9999
Fax: +267 392-2781

**REGIONAL OFFICES**

**SOUTH REGION**
P.O. Box 263, Lobatse
Tel: +267 533-0566,
Fax: +267 533-2477

**SOUTH CENTRAL REGION**
Private Bag 00102, Gaborone
Tel: +267 363-8000 / 363-9999
Fax: +267 392-2781

**CENTRAL REGION**
P.O. Box 129, Selebi Phikwe
Tel: +267 261-3699 / 261-0627
Fax: +267 261-5367

**NORTH REGION**
P.O. Box 457, Francistown
Tel: +267 241-3635
Fax: +267 241-3114

**NORTH WEST REGION**
P.O. Box 219, Maun
Tel: +267 686-1312
Fax: +267 686-0194

**VACCINATIONS**
If you are travelling to Botswana from areas infected with Yellow Fever, you must have a valid Yellow Fever vaccination certificate. Otherwise, no other immunisations are required. However, it would be wise to have an updated TPD (tetanus, polio, diphtheria) vaccine, and a Hepatitis A vaccine.

**CUSTOMS**
All goods acquired outside Botswana must be declared when you enter the country.

**BOATS**
No boat, mokoro or aquatic apparatus may be imported into Botswana, unless the owner is in possession of an import permit issued by the Department of Water Affairs.

For more information contact:
Department of Water Affairs
P/Bag 0029, Gaborone
Tel: +267 360-7100

**PETS**
The importation of animals is closely regulated for public health reasons and also for the well being of the animals. Domestic pets and livestock may be imported subject to animal health restrictions.

For more information contact:
Director of Animal Health & Production
P/Bag 0032, Gaborone
Tel: +267 395-0500

**Note:** A valid certificate of identity, rabies vaccination and movement permit issued in Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland, Namibia or Zimbabwe will be accepted at the time of importation into Botswana.

**DUTY FREE ALLOWANCES**
Customs duties are not charged on the following goods imported as accompanied or unaccompanied passengers’ baggage:

- Wines ......................... 2 litres
- Spirituous* ..................... 1 litre
- Cigarettes ..................... 200
- Cigars .......................... 20
- Tobacco** ..................... 250 gms
- Perfume ....................... 50 ml
- Toilet water................... 250 ml

* Includes all other alcoholic beverages

** Includes cigarette and pipe tobacco

** Note: Duty will be payable at the applicable rates where travellers import goods exceeding the above allowances. Travellers importing goods for business or commercial purpose will not qualify for the above allowances.

**DRIVERS’ LICENSES**
Drivers are required to carry their licenses at all times. Licenses from neighbouring countries are accepted in Botswana. If not written in English, a certified written translation is required. International drivers’ licenses are accepted in Botswana.

**IMPORTATION OF MOTOR VEHICLES**
Non-residents visiting Botswana and coming from a country outside the Southern African Common Customs Area for a limited period are normally required to produce a carnet or bill of entry (any duty liability thereon being
secured by bond or cash deposit) in respect of their motor vehicles. For further information, please contact Department of Customs.

**Note:** The Southern African Common Customs Area comprises Botswana, Lesotho, South Africa, Swaziland and Namibia.

### WHAT TO BRING

- Binoculars, torch, insect repellent, lip salve, sunscreen, sunglasses. Cosmetics, medications, and cigarettes are all available in the major towns, but if specific brand names are needed, it is best to bring enough to last your stay.

However, care needs to be taken to comply with international aviation security regulations for items in carry on luggage. Contact your airline for details.

### WHAT TO WEAR

- In summer, lightweight, light-coloured cottons are preferable.
- Garments of neutral colours that blend with the bush and forest are advisable for safaris and game viewing.
- Avoid synthetic materials and black clothing, as they increase perspiration and discomfort.
- Bring a lightweight jacket and/or jersey for unexpected temperature changes or rain.
- In winter, wear trousers, long-sleeved shirts / blouses and jerseys.
- From May – August, night temperatures can fall below zero degrees celsius, so warm jerseys and jackets are vital, especially on morning and evening game drives.
- Closed, comfortable walking shoes or gym shoes are a must in all seasons.
- Special attention should be given to protection from the sun. Bring a sunhat, good quality sunscreen, sun lotion and polarised sunglasses.
- Wide brimmed hats are preferable to baseball caps.

### IMPORTATION OF GOODS

#### CONSUMER GOODS

The following consumer goods may be imported for private use without an import permit, provided they do not exceed the maximum allowable quantities.

Key: PP-per person. PF-per family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRODUCT</th>
<th>MAX QUANTITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MEAT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red meat, goat/lamb</td>
<td>25 kg PF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry meat</td>
<td>5 kg PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinned poultry meat</td>
<td>20 kg PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAIRY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td>36 eggs PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh milk</td>
<td>2 litres PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHERS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize / maize products</td>
<td>25 kg PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>25 kg PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulses (beans, peas, lentils)</td>
<td>25 kg PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorghum / sorghum products</td>
<td>25 kg PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage, Onions</td>
<td>1 bag PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes, Oranges, Tomatoes, Chimolia, Rape, Spinach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread loaves</td>
<td>6 per week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information contact:
Ministry of Agriculture, Enquiries
P/Bag 003, Gaborone
Tel +267 395-0500

#### MEAT / DAIRY PRODUCTS

The regulations on importing meat products change frequently, because they are based on disease outbreaks in different countries. Always ask customs officials upon arrival what are the specific regulations.

For more information contact:
Ministry of Agriculture, Enquiries
P/Bag 003, Gaborone
Tel +267 395-0500

#### RESTRICTED GOODS

These are goods that can only be imported with a license or permit.
- Narcotic, habit forming drugs and related substances in any form;
- Firearms, ammunition and explosives;
- Indecent and obscene material such as pornographic books, magazines, films, videos, DVDs and software.

#### PLANTS

Plants may be imported subject to plant health restrictions, and South African transit permits may also be required in respect of plants shipped through South Africa.
**COMMUNICATIONS**

Most of Botswana is networked by automatic telephone exchanges, with public telephones in even the most remote places.

The International access code in Botswana is 00. When calling international to Botswana, dial +267.

Cellular phone coverage is provided by three mobile networks in Botswana: Mascom, Orange and be Mobile. Mobile Sim cards are available in most supermarkets and service stations. All major towns in Botswana are network covered, as well as portions of the national highway.

Mobile networks in Botswana offer various services to their subscribers, including Internet access, fax, and International Roaming. It is always important to seek advice about network services so as to choose one that will work for you.

Using a cellular phone whilst driving is against the law in Botswana, and liable to a P300 fine. Earphones or hands-free devices are recommended.

For further information on the network providers in Botswana, consult the following services:

- **MASCOM** www.mascom.co.bw
- **ORANGE** www.orange-botswana.co.bw
- **BTC** www.btc.co.bw
- **be Mobile** www.be-mobile.co.bw

**ELECTRICAL SUPPLY**

Electricity is supplied at 220/240v. Both square and round wall plugs are used.

**FIREARMS & AMMUNITION**

The issue of firearms licenses in Botswana is strictly controlled, and all firearms imported under the authority of an import permit must be licensed immediately upon arrival in Botswana. The importation of firearms that do not have the manufacturer's serial number or other number by which they can be identified, stamped or engraved on a metal part of the weapon is totally prohibited.

It should also be noted that police permits for firearms are issued on a limited quota basis, and there can be a considerable delay in obtaining a permit, particularly on first importation. It is advisable for intending importers to make applications well in advance of dispatch, so that unnecessary inconvenience and expenses can be avoided.

Police permits for firearms are issued by:

**Central Arms, The Registry**
P O Box 334, Gaborone.
Tel: +267 391-4202, +267 391-4106

**DIAMOND PURCHASE**

Visitors to Botswana have the opportunity to purchase diamond jewellery from authorised dealers. A strict certification system is in place to inform the buyer of the origin of the diamond, and the stated value and quality is verified.
HEALTH

Botswana is one of the healthiest countries in sub-Saharan Africa, with good primary health care facilities available throughout the country. However, the following health precautions are advised.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is essential for visitors to remote areas of Botswana to have a comprehensive medical insurance policy, to provide coverage for the treatment of serious illnesses/accidents, and if required, medical evacuation. Personal effects insurance is also advisable.

Check that your insurance policy will be accepted by service providers in Botswana. Ensure that you are treated by licensed medical personnel to enable you to provide your insurance company with appropriate documentation and receipts.

Reasonably priced medical services are available at government clinics and hospitals throughout the country. Private medical practitioners are available in the cities and major towns, such as Gaborone, Francistown and Maun.

Gaborone Private Hospital is the largest private hospital in Botswana. The hospital requires medical coverage, or cash payment in advance where medical coverage is not available.

DRINKING WATER

Tap water throughout the country is safe to drink. Bottled mineral water is readily available in most shops and supermarkets, and at camps and lodges.

Tourists travelling by road are advised to carry sufficient water at all times.

HIV/AIDS

Visitors are advised to take the necessary precautions against HIV/AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

MALARIA

Malaria, including cerebral malaria, is common in northern Botswana, in the Okavango and Chobe areas, particularly during and immediately following the rainy season, from November to April.

As the strains of malaria, and the drugs used to combat them, frequently change, and as certain strains can become drug resistant, it is best to seek medical advice before your departure and take any medication prescribed. Pregnant or very young children are not advised to travel to malarial areas.

Other precautions are: to wear long sleeves, socks, closed shoes, and generally keep the body covered, to sleep with a mosquito net and to use mosquito coils and repellent.

SUN AND HEAT-RELATED PROBLEMS

Always take preventive measures that include wearing a wide-brimmed sunhat and sunglasses, liberally applying sunscreen every three or four hours, regularly taking rehydration mixes, drinking plenty of water and fruit juices (at least three litres of liquid daily), avoiding prolonged exposure to the sun, and avoiding excessive amounts of alcohol, which causes dehydration.

SHOPPING

All major towns in Botswana, including Maun and Kasane, have shopping centres and supermarkets, and all basic commodities can easily be purchased. Many regional chain stores operate in Botswana. In addition, there are 24-hour convenience shops at most fuel service stations.

There is an increasing range of local arts and crafts on sale in Gaborone, Maun and Kasane and other tourist areas; they include Botswana’s renowned world-class baskets, woodcarvings, jewellery, pottery, tapestries, fabrics and clothing, glassware, and San crafts.

VALUE ADDED TAX

To claim 10% VAT refund for total value of goods purchased, the amount spent should be more than P5 000. In such cases, the following is required: a tax invoice stating VAT paid, your passport number and your bank account details.

It is always advisable to keep a copy of the VAT form as a record for any follow-up on the transaction.

VAT claims usually can be made at all major border posts and airports.

SAFETY

The self-drive camper driving the open roads in Botswana should always drive at a reasonable speed, and avoid over-taking, except when absolutely necessary.

CRIME

Botswana remains a relatively safe place to visit or live. Take the normal precautions you would take anywhere else:

- Always lock car doors;
- Always lock hotel rooms;
- Don’t leave valuables in cars or hotel rooms;
- Take care with your bags in shopping centres and other crowded places, and after coming out of banks or ATM kiosks;
- Avoid walking alone at night.
**ACCOMMODATION**

All major towns and villages in the country have hotels, lodges, motels and guesthouses, catering to a range of budgets, and some have camping facilities. In and around parks and reserves, there are a variety of lodges, as well as camps in private concessions.

Camping facilities are widely available around the country, both at private lodges and/or hotels, and within the government parks and reserves.

Visit [www.botswanatourism.us](http://www.botswanatourism.us) for graded accommodation facilities.

**NATIONAL PARKS & RESERVES**

Botswana’s extensive system of national parks and game reserves comprises approximately 18% of national land area. A further 20% of national land is allocated as Wildlife Management Areas which act as buffer zones around the parks and reserves.

The parks are primarily unfenced, allowing wildlife to freely roam, are situated in a variety of habitats and for the most part are well managed.

Camping facilities are available in all national parks and reserves. Campsites typically have standpipes and ablution blocks, with toilets and showers.

All camping in the national parks and reserves is in designated campsites, and campers are not allowed to camp elsewhere in the parks.

Reservations for camping in national parks and reserves should be made prior to departure.

For park camping reservations, contact:

**Department of Wildlife & National Parks**

**Gaborone Office**: P.O. Box 131, Gaborone  
Tel: +267 318-0774, Fax: +267 391-2354  
**Maun Office**: P.O. Box 11, Maun  
Tel: +267 686-1265, Fax: +267 686-1264

Offices can be emailed on dwnp@gov.bw

**Note**: If you cannot honour your reservations, please cancel well in advance to give others a chance.

**NORTHERN BOTSWANA**

**CHOBE NATIONAL PARK**
A park abundant in wildlife, offering a safari experience of a lifetime.

- **Size**: 11 700 km²
- **When to visit**: all year round
- **Rainfall**: 600mm per annum
- **Altitude**: 930m to 1000m above sea level

**MOREMI GAME RESERVE**
Described as one of the most beautiful wildlife reserves in Africa.

- **Size**: 5 000 km²
- **When to visit**: all year round
- **Climate**: Temperatures range from about 57° F/14° C (July) to 75° F/24° C (January)
- **Rainfall**: 525mm per annum, varying
- **Altitude**: 930m to 1000m above sea level

**NXAI PAN NATIONAL PARK**
Once part of a prehistoric lake that covered central Botswana, this park is now transformed into fossil pans covered with grassland that attract an abundance of game.

- **Size**: 2 578 km²
- **When to visit**: all year round
- **Climate**: Hot, extreme daytime conditions

**MAKGADIKGADI PANS NATIONAL PARK**
Part of one of the world’s largest salt pans and prehistoric lakes.

- **Size**: 12 000 km²
- **When to visit**: all year round
- **Climate**: Hot, extreme daytime conditions
- **Rainfall**: 500mm per annum
- **Altitude**: 930m to 1000m above sea level

**MAUN EDUCATIONAL PARK**
Situated on the eastern banks of the Thamalakane River, the park is an education centre for schoolchildren; it has a variety of wildlife species that can be viewed from game hides.

- **When to visit**: all year round

**CENTRAL BOTSWANA**

**CENTRAL KALAHARI GAME RESERVE**
The world’s second largest reserve, holding vast open plains, scrub bush, salt pans, ancient riverbeds, and sand dunes.

- **Size**: 52 800 km²
- **When to visit**: all year round
- **Climate**: Hot, dry conditions
- **Rainfall**: 150mm per annum
- **Altitude**: 600m to 1600m above sea level

**KHUTSE GAME RESERVE**
Characterised by undulating plains and dry Kalahari bush savannah, with an extensive mineral pan system in the reserve, which attracts animals.

- **Size**: 2,500 km²
- **When to visit**: all year round

**WESTERN BOTSWANA**

**KGALAGADI TRANSFRONTIER PARK**
Famous for its large antelope herds, this is Africa’s first peace park, where animals roam freely across the national borders of Botswana and South Africa.

- **Size**: 36 000 km²
- **When to visit**: all year round
- **Climate**: Hot, dry conditions
- **Rainfall**: 200mm per annum, varying
- **Altitude**: 900m to 1100m above sea level

**SOUTHERN BOTSWANA**

**GABORONE GAME RESERVE**
Nestled in the city and a popular spot for city residents, the park offers game
and bird viewing, picnic sites and an education centre.
Size: 500 Hectares
When to visit: all year round
Rainfall: 510mm per annum
Altitude: 970m above sea level

MANNYELANG GAME RESERVE
The name of the park derives from the Cape Vulture, an endangered bird that is protected; the area is fenced and the birds can only be viewed from afar.
When to visit: all year round

SELF DRIVE CAMPING
Embarking on a camping trip in Botswana requires a good deal of planning and preparation. You will be going to remote areas, accessible only by four-wheel drive, where water, petrol or food may not be available. You may often be driving on rough terrain, and through heavy sand, in conditions very different from those you are used to.

As a general rule, take all food requirements to last your stay. Take at least 20 litres of water per person, preferably more; for desert destinations, carry between 50 and 100 litres. Carry at least 100 litres of petrol in long-range tanks or in metal jerry tins. Take spare vehicle parts for breakdowns.

As campsites within game reserves and national parks are usually not fenced, it is important for campers to take necessary precautionary measures to ensure their safety, and to abide by the information provided by wildlife officers.

The following basic camping rules should be strictly heeded:
- Only camp in designated campsites.
- Always sleep in your tent, roof tent or vehicle. Make sure your tent zips up well.
- Don’t sleep with legs or arms protruding from the tent.
- Use rubbish receptacles at the campsites; if there are none, carry away all rubbish until you get to the next town.
- Cigarette butts should be well extinguished and placed in a rubbish bag, not thrown on the ground.
- Make sure the campfire is well extinguished at the end of the evening, or after use, and cover it with sand.
- Don’t sleep on bridges or animal paths, particularly those of elephants and hippos.
- Bury all faecal matter and burn all toilet paper.
- Don’t bathe or drink from still bodies of water; there is the danger of bilharzia.
- In the Okavango, don’t swim in lagoons or streams; there is the danger of crocodiles and/or hippos.
- Children must be constantly supervised. Never leave them alone in the campsite. Never allow children to nap on the ground or in the open.
- Don’t stray far from the campsite, or walk in the bush, unless with a qualified guide.

The general rule of thumb for camping in Botswana is – take only memories, leave only footprints.

FISHING
In the Panhandle area of the Okavango, there are a number of camps and lodges that specialise in fishing excursions. Fishing can also be done on the Chobe River, outside the park. Fishing is only allowed in designated areas of the national parks, and only with an official permit.

For fishing permit enquiries, contact:
Department of Wildlife & National Parks
Gaborone Office: P.O. Box 131, Gaborone
Tel: +267 397-1405
Fax: +267 391-2354 / 393-2205
Maun Office: P.O Box 11, Maun
Tel: +267 686-0368, Fax: +267 686-0053
Kasane Office: P.O. Box 17, Kasane
Tel: +267 625-0486, Fax: +267 625-1623
Note: Permits must be applied for in person. Both monthly and annual permits are issued.

FIREWOOD
Firewood is defined as wood that is both dead and fallen and which can be removed without the use of tools. Self-drive campers should use firewood sparingly and only when necessary.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambulance</td>
<td>997 (toll free)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>999 (toll free)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Brigade</td>
<td>998 (toll free)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Rescue</td>
<td>911 (toll free)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Air Rescue</td>
<td>390-1601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mascom</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be mobile</td>
<td>1333</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### LOCAL OFFICES

**Headquarters**
- Private Bag 00275
- Plot 50676, Fairgrounds Office Park
- Gaborone, Botswana
- Tel: +267 391-3111
- Fax: +267 395-9220
- board@botswanatourism.co.bw
- www.botswanatourism.co.bw

**Main Mall**
- Cresta President Hotel, Ground Floor
- Gaborone, Botswana
- Tel: +267 395-9455
- Fax: +267 318-1373

**Francistown**
- P.O. Box 301236
- Plot 316 Shop D5 & D6, C.B.D,
- Ground floor of Diggers Inn Hotel,
- Francistown, Botswana
- Tel: +267 244-0113
- Fax: +267 244-0120
- francistown@botswanatourism.co.bw

**Ghanzi**
- P.O. Box 282
- Department of Tourism Building,
- Opposite Shell Filling Station
- Ghanzi, Botswana
- Tel: +267 659-6704
- Fax: +267 659-6706
- ghanzi@botswanatourism.co.bw

**Selebi-Phikwe**
- P.O. Box 2885
- Lot 2574, Block 2, Shop 3B
- Central Business District
- Selebi-Phikwe, Botswana

**Kasane**
- P.O. Box 381
- Madiba Shopping Centre,
- Opposite Bus Rank, next to The Bakery
- Kasane, Botswana
- Tel: +267 625-0555
- Tel: +267 625-2210/1 (airport office)
- Fax: +267 625-0424
- kasane@botswanatourism.co.bw

**Maun**
- P.O. Box 20068, Boseja
- Plot 246, Apollo House
- Maun, Botswana
- Tel: +267 686-1056
- Tel: +267 686-3093 (airport office)
- Fax: +267 686-1062
- maun@botswanatourism.co.bw

**Palapye**
- P.O. Box 11040
- Plot 3726, along the A1 Road,
- Agrivert Building
- Palapye, Botswana
- Tel: +267 492-2138
- Fax: +267 492-2147
- palapye@botswanatourism.co.bw

**Tsabong**
- P.O. Box 688
- Department of Tourism Building
- Tsabong, Botswana
- Tel: +267 654-0822
- Fax: +267 654-0813/4
- tsabong@botswanatourism.co.bw

### OFFICES AND AGENCIES ABROAD

**Germany**
- c/o Interface International
- Karl-Marx-Allee 91 A
- 10243 Berlin, Germany
- Tel: +49 (0)30-42-02-84-64
- Fax: +49 (0)30-42-25-62-86
- Contact: Jörn Eike Siemens
- j.siemens@interface-net.de
- www.botswanatourism.eu

**United Kingdom**
- c/o Botswana High Commission
- 6 Stratford Place
- London, W1C 1AY
- Tel: +44 207 499-0031
- Fax: +44 207 495-8595
- Contact: Dawn Parr
- dparr@botswanatourism.org.uk
- www.botswanatourism.org.uk

**United States of America**
- c/o Partner Concepts LLC
- 127 Lubrano Drive, Suite 203
- Annapolis, MD 21401 USA
- Toll-free (USA/Canada): +1-888-675-7660
- Tel: 410-266-8429
- Fax: 410-224-1499
- Contact: Leslee Hall
- info@botswanatourism.us
- www.botswanatourism.us
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